

Pro Wrestling Sushi

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"At one point, I felt the fans should have done a run-in to save Sabu from the table!"

-- Comment made by Northern California sports writer Mike Wood at the 6/19 FATHERS DAY BASH in San Jose, CA, following Sabu's repeated, brutal attempts to use his body to demolish a table that easily could have withstood a direct hit from a small-yield nuclear weapon.

(SNS -- Sushi News Service Story)

Michael Buffer involved in post-CLASH pier-six brawl!

Charleston, S.C. -- "It was brutal!" said Arn Anderson.

"It was horrible!" said Cactus Jack.

"It was sickening!" said Kevin Sullivan.

"Ssorg saw ti!" said Evad Sullivan.

The above comments were made only moments after WCW's suave "main events" ring announcer Michael "Let's get rrrrready to rrrrrumble!" Buffer was rushed to Charleston Memorial Hospital due to leg, arm, and head injuries suffered during a post-CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS locker room brawl on 6/23.

"I'm stunned by what happened," said Anderson.

"I'm speechless," said Jack.

"I'm blown away," said Sullivan.

"Desufnoc m'I," said Evad.

[Sushi News Service will report further details as information becomes available.]

Especially heavy week of pro wrestling yields 'special' Sushi coverage...

Hello, everyone. Welcome to this "special issue" of *Pro Wrestling Sushi*, one containing a bit more shoot-coverage of the sport than usual, something many of you have said you'd like to see once in a while, not to mention the fact that there was so much happening in the world of graps lately, including WCW's CLASH from Charleston, AAA's lucha invasion of Washington State, the WWF's KOTR tournament-PPV from Baltimore, and Sabu's controversial first "ladder match" here in San Jose, during the FATHERS' DAY BASH indy show (which we'll give our own opinions about in the post-BASH AT THE BEACH issue coming out right after the 7/17 WCW pay per view.)

Also, since a lot of readers have mentioned or asked about Ron Lemieux and Dave Meltzer (following the heat between us and the published regrets on my part for creating a lot of it, especially all my Meltzer "bashing" vs. straight-forward expressions of disagreement), I've subsequently had a couple of really good phone conversations with Ron, and, during the 6/19 San Jose card, after I spoke briefly with Dave, apologizing to him face to face about my bashing him, we spent the next ten minutes or so talking about wrestling and doing instant analysis of the Crazy Boy vs. Pilito Suicida match as if the past crap had never happened. What more can I say?

Which brings to mind Sushi #60, where I supported Dave's price hike, but where I also editorialized how I was glad he was returning consistency to the *Observer's* letters section (where I truly believed letters from certain writers had been limited in the past because it was my understanding that Dave did not want the section to turn into a cult of personalities.) In response, Dave told me the only time he intentionally tries to limit anything from the section is when one writer insults another writer. He also said he gets enough letters each week to fill 6-8 pages and simply can't print all letters received. He said he feels his readers prefer letters about wrestling angles vs. personal attacks.

Special thanks to Brent Siewert of Kirkland, WA for colorful commentary regarding his first live lucha libre experience (see the *Mascarito Susheeto!* section). Also, please remember, red digits on your envelope represent your previous sub balance ~~erased-out~~ and your current sub balance in *dollars and cents*. Personal checks from U.S. subscribers should be made out to "Jeff Mullins" only. Cost per issue is \$1.50 (\$2.50 for overseas in international postal money orders). Brief letters, comments, and questions for our own special "Letters", "You Said It!", "Readers' Conumdrums" and "Mascarito Susheeto!" sections are always welcomed. --Jeff Mullins, Editor

Charleston CLASH delivers Hogan, the goods, and a 'sensational' Sherri!

Even with all the repetitive commercials, repetitive commercials, and repetitive commercials (for flavored candies, milk-doing-a-body-good, EXTRA sugarfree gum, and Larry Posen's BELTONE ELECTRONICS hearing aides), somehow, once again, another one of Ted Turner's

free, two-hour wrestling shows on TBS, known to one and all as the CLASH OF CHAMPIONS (this one on 6/23 from Charleston, South Carolina), delivered the goodies, and, in some ways, it delivered them better than most of the major two-hour and forty-five minute pay per view extravaganzas that these free shows are supposed to set up.

Whether "lackluster" will be the case for WCW's next PPV, called BASH ON THE BEACH, from Orlando, FL, on 7/17, featuring the big blond sweaty challenger (who sneers) versus the sort-of-big-blond champ (who goes "Wooooo!") it remains to be seen, but, Ooooooo, whatcha gonna dooooo when the Hulkster and all his "older generation" Hulkamaniacs wrap their arthritic and withered pythons all over youuuuuu?!

Well, with at least five titles on the line (World Tag, TV, U.S., World and International World Heavyweight), and with the long awaited comeback of a rogue cop who was once called "Bossman" in another federation, and with the promised ringside appearance of the big blond sweaty guy (who was once called "Thunder Lips" in a Sylvester Stallone movie) to provide more than enough curiosity to garner what should have earned TBS some hef-heft-hefty TV ratings-points (God, vitamins, demandments, and prayers help us all if the ratings sucked), the big question on everyone's mind (as the opening moments of the CLASH graced our TV sets, with Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, and Gene Okerlund on screen), was what "The Brain" was going to say, as he kicked-off the festivities, about wife beating, Bronco-driving, joy-riding, apprehended fugitive from justice and accused double-murderer O.J. Simpson.

Surprise.

Heenan worked the tragedy "light" (we can only imagine what he really wanted to say), which was about the only light piece of work the entire evening as, from start to finish, this CLASH will go down as one of the more enjoyable occasions to require one's significant suspension of disbelief!

Count 'em, ladies and gentlemen, not one, but two referees--Pee Wee Anderson and Some Other Guy--were used in the opening bout to see to it that those rule-breaking, chair-busting, garbage can-bursting Nasty Boys vs One Eyed Jack, I mean, One Eared Jack and Kevin Sullivan did not break rules, bust chairs, and burst garbage cans (on the free show!)

Yes, the double ref gimmick worked, as the only serious rule broken was Webster's "thou shalt not spell backwards" rule, which was broken early when Kevin Sullivan's wrestling brudder, Evad, on crutches, held up a hand-painted sign that said "Hulk selur!" (Hmmmmm. If a normal man who gets slapped a lot by his brudder suddenly starts to spell words backwards, will another solid round of on-camera slapping reverse the problem? I can't wait to find out!)

This match was an excellent example of how serious, hard working, professional wrestlers who know their craft, can follow a series of gimmick matches, which featured brawling all over the place, and still put on an exciting match that sticks fairly close to the ring and leaves the audience hungry for more. Best moments came when everyone started the match by slapping each other and when Jack tried to slice-off his remaining ear by taking a head-first bump against the guard rail, and the camera stayed on him at ground level as he crawled awkwardly along the floor like a stunned water buffalo who's middle ear had just exploded. I'm giving this match, which Jack and Sully won, **** because it was non-stop action without anyone doing what might be called a normal wrestlin move and everyone in it was able to maintain heat and my interest without needing to resort to hitting each other over the heads with the usual array of kitchen sinks and other items from warehouse inventory. Would definitely look forward to the rematch, when the BASH comes to Oro de Lando, but it appears Jack and Sullivan will be facing Paul Roma and Paul Orndorff. Sigh.

After all of those weekly WCW tapes chronicling the turn of Big Bubba Bossman Ray Traylor into a Guardian Angel, I expected a more spectacular return to the ring, though I wonder if his debut was toned down so as not to clash with the Hulkster's debut. Wrong move, I think, as the whole month of pushing the angle. In the end, when the new character was introduced for his first match came off lame. I like the gimmick, though, where Guardian held up a hand and some fingers and started counting to three, giving Tex Slazenger three chances to fight fair (or "three strikes") before Guardian put him down for the one-two-three count. Nice piece of scripting. Probleemo, though. I'm already beginning to wonder how real Guardian Angel and group founder Curtis Sliewa (and some on his staff), who went along with the angle to the point of being involved in it, is gonna feel and react when Brudder Bossman Angel turns, as most faces do at some point or another. Dare say that's when Bubba Angel might want to be careful some dark and windy night while walking the mean streets of New York...alone. *1/2

Just as I was about to spend some serious time figuring out how many combinations of

candies there are in a giant-sized bag of SKITTLES (Hmmm, "Lemonmelberlime!") or what it is about the babe in the EXTRA SUGER FREE GUM spot that stirs me, the commercials suddenly ended and there it was again, the O.J. Simpson motorcade-chase-scene filling the screen. Oops, I was mistaken. Actually, it was a big white limo, not a Bronco, surrounded by Charleston cop cars, though I'm still not sure the fugitives inside the limo (How much is Hogan and Jimmy Hart holding up WCW for anyway?) should not be locked up for robbery. Guess the jury is still out on this one, at least until 7/17.

Am I the only one who cringes a little whenever I see WCW's Chief of Security Doug Dillinger get anywhere near one of the company's superstars, like when he was opening the door of the limo to let Hogan out? It's a left-over paranoid reaction from years ago when Dougster was trying to stop Sting from climbing the cage to get at Flair and, forgetting to work light, Dillinger ripped the slats outta Sting's knee-cartilage, forcing an entire program and major PPV to be changed. Luckily for Hulk, Dillinger managed to open the car door and close it without nailing one of the big guy's 24-inch cannons! Is Hogan taking all this seriously, or is it just me who's slightly put-off by his attitude, or does anyone else feel he's playing this whole thing for a joke, smiling and mugging at the camera and fans just a little too much? And with all his comments about wanting to grab Ted Turner's arm and force him to sign the contract, man, who's Flair meeting in the ring on 7/17, anyway? Jane Fonda's husband? Or Mrs. Boella's little pumpkin? . . . Now, whenever I see Jimmy Hart, why does the old BEATLES song "Ticket to Ride" come to mind? *Strawgrappleberry?*!

I liked the white Colonial-styled wig and the red "The British are coming!" War of Independence military outfit worn to the ring by Lord Steven Regal. Maybe during their rematch, when Larry Zbyszko tries to reclaim his short-lived TV belt that Regal took away from him when Sir William interfered and Regal reversed the pin by holding onto the ropes, Larry can come to the ring wearing a cardboard cut-out of the Liberty Bell. I remember when Larry the "original" living-Z-man-legend used to do those spinning leg kicks which would catch even the tallest opponants on the chops! At this point, in a career that's about as tarnished and cracked as the Liberty Bell itself, Zybszko's spinning mule kicks keep hitting opponant's lower and lower, with one of his kicks catching Regal in the figs. (Why is it that when a wrestler gets a boot in the figs, the color commentator always says, without fail, something like, "Well, he's going to be singing soprano for a while!" I don't know about anyone else, but in my days of rough and tumble athletics, whenever I got my figs tapped, I'd moan a lot, in sort of a weak base or low baritone, with any kind of singing being the last thing on my mind. I still like this guy Regal and Sir William Dundee's act, though, especially the way Dundee gets that stereotypical huffy Brit look on his face and the way Regal puts up his dukes to fight. Man, if I were a resident from Great Britain seeing him do that, in portrayal of his countrymen, here in America, I'd want to load up the gunboats and make another run up the Potomac River! I know I'm wrong about this, and maybe my still broken collar-bone pain pills are numbing the wrong parts of my brain and body, but when I think of some of the hilarious to brutal angles and skits WCW can do with Regal and Zybszko, I start laughing inside, causing the mending bone to move and grind a little.**

Somebody needs to tell Jesse Ventura that if he is going to suck up to Bob Dhue on nation-wide cable TV, by telling jokes about Dhue and his inter-office golf games, he should publish an insider newsletter, call it the Who Cares Observer, and spare us from having to hear stuff like that on TV. He gets paid WHAT!!! to say stuff like that?! . . . Next time Larry Posen's ad for BELTONE ELECTRONICS hearing aide comes on, close your eyes and tell me that Larry does not sound like the former "Blond Bomber" A.K.A. "Crippler" Ray Stevens! Man, hearing that voice again, the sound of gravel falling into a tub full of broken pencil necks and chopped geeks, makes me want to drive up to the Cow Palace in San Francisco and just sit outside it for awhile remembering when. . . Does Dustin Rhodes have to wear his cowboy hat that low on his head? So low, you can't see his eyes?! On Garth Brooks a hat five gallons too large looks country cool. On Dustin it looks like he should cut holes in the top so his ears can stick out and he can go around beating a drum like the ENERGIZER bunny! Man, if my son ever wore his hat like that in public, like Dusty's son does, I'd drop my pants and slap my loins silly for spawning such a goofus! Hope Arn turns on him!

Whereas I like "Stunning" Steve Austin and Johnny B. Badd as the opening act on a show, because, even though they do miss some spots, they make up for it in intensity and effort, by the time we are into the middle or near the end of the card, I want either a gimmick match or an intermission before the really hot stuff gets underway, since I simply don't buy B. Badd as a creditable contender for anything, and since Austin is wrestling someone who means nothing, then he also means nothing to me, and his U.S. title means nothing to me, either. Badd should be a heel. And Austin is being pushed a bit too fast, and should

really be working with Col. Rob Parker in his corner for at least another year. Badd thought he won the belt and walked off with it, but guess again.**

Sounded to me like the big blond sweaty guy with the big bag o' Ted Turner's money came out to a lot of boo's and hoots, though he didn't seem to miss a beat, though the old fire and conviction was not really there either. The rockets and music announcing his entrance and telling the world that he is "American made" sounded great though, and the rippling and ghost-like graphics of an American flag looking like an aurora borealis in the background when he was interviewing with Okerlund was state-of-the-art remarkable!

But it was the sudden, furious image of a larger than life Ric Flair appearing on the big screen behind Hogan that took the breath away and got this viewer leaning forward on his seat, as Flair's robed image emerged as this darkish-violet, purple-evil, silver-maned gargoyle-skulled mad man whose flashing bright teeth and brilliant Tasmanian Devil-eyes seemed to radiate a piercing white-hot fire of hate and insanity as he spit venom and brimstone at Hogan. I almost expected to see Flair leap off the screen, like the "wolves" in a few scenes from the new Jack Nicholson movie, and literally sink his fans into Hogan's neck.

That vision of Ric Flair, (ala the Wicked Witch in WIZARD OF OZ, Emperor Ming in the original black and white FLASH GORDON serials, Darth Vader in STAR WARS, and Snow White's evil stepmother when she's running along those jagged, black, lightning-struck) will stick in my mind for as long as I live. George Lucas, Stephen Spielberg, the folks at Disney could not have conjured up a more riveting visual moment. And from that point on, I was once again glad to be a WCW fan, thankful that maybe, just maybe, they'll prove me wrong and that I'll wind up eating my recent words of doom and gloom, as the rest of the card (hopefully the forerunner of the next six months to come) played itself out in my mind:

Sherri coming to the ring wearing black and white face-paint like her "man" Sting. . . Sherri wearing a black and white dress with frills and feathers that looks like she's borrowed the wardrobe from Johnny B. Badd's closet. . . Sherri sitting at ringside "watching" her man, her face-paint making her look like early 70's Demon Lizard Gene Simmons of the rock group KISS. . . Flair working the match with his floppy Raggedy Andy puppet-on-a-string boots on, as Stinger is slapping, and dribbling, and slam-dunking Flair from pillar to post, with Flair digging deep into his usual bag of tricks and taking every bump, flop, and turn-buckle flip in his repertoire. . . Sting missing a horizontal drop kick, with his toes wiggling a full half second in the air before gravity does its thing. . . Heenan's comment that Sherri's war paint looks like she was eating an Oreo cookie when it "exploded in her face!". . . Sherri selling the big Cactus Jack-like bump to the floor when her head seems like it smacks, (and probably did legit) into the bottom of the guard rail where it meets cement. . . Sherri selling the "injury" big time, causing Sting (YOU FOOL, IT'S A TRICK!!!) to lose his concentration and check to see if Sherri is okay. . . as Flair then pins Stinger to unify the two belts (will they melt them down and create a new one from the two?). . . Kah-blooie, Sherri using her purse to nail the back of the head of the face-painted man with no brains. . . as Hogan does the run-in to ruin Flair and Sherri's let's stomp on ol' Stinger's fat ol' haid and victory party.****

Hmmmm, how much is WCW paying the "Sensuous One", anyway? I know it's all realitive, and Hogan and Flair are the really "big" stars, and, heck, Sherri's only a babe, but were that entire match and post match run-in to have been run without her, need I say, it would not exactly have been another, uh, *Thunderous Day in Paradise!*

Wooooo, so watcha gonna doooooo, when 7/17 comes rolling along and tries to wrap its pythons around youuuu?

Post-CLASH spin: When Ted Turner sat down at the table during the 6/25 WCW SATURDAY NIGHT show to oversee the Hogan-Flair contract signing at CNN Center, did any of the following thoughts flash throuh your mind? The lucky stiff is married to Jane Fonda! Wonder if he'll take a bump? What if Flair just reaches over, grabs his tie, and head-butts him? Hey, this guy really does love his wrestling group! What dark secret is Bill Shaw holding over Ted that keeps him in his job? When Ted got up from the table to leave the conference room, after Hogan and Flair exchanged unpleasantries, was Ted fanning the air because the heat in the kitchen was getting too hot...or was it because Okerlund had just farted?

(SNS - Sushi News Service)

Assailant explains why he attacked Buffer

Charleston, S.C. -- In attempting to explain why he clobbered Michael Buffer over the head with a garbage can, potatoed Buffer's "mic"-holding hand with a chair, and put a figure-four leg-lock on Buffer, refusing to release it until Buffer's leg snapped, WCW's "prelim

events" announcer Gary Michael Capetta confessed it was something Buffer said to him (much like when one wrestler tells another wrestler to stop using his trade-mark finishing move) that caused him to go berserk and attack the highly paid, debonair, ear ring-wearing Buffer.

According to Capetta, "When Buffer told me he did not like the way I was rolling my R's, when I was introducing the warm-up acts, that he's the only one in the building who get's to roll R's, and that he was going to complain to Mr. Bischoff about it, well, I just went nuts. I'm sorry. It won't happen again."

Serious Sushi: a special in-depth report on a major wrestling event! Tonya Harding, lucha flyers, & Love Machine rekindle former Don Owen territory. Unique cards establish Sandy Barr as Northwest 'King of Creative!'

By Jeff Mullins, editor

During a three day period beginning Monday, 6/20, Capital Sports Wrestling promoter Sandy Barr of Portland, Oregon was a very busy man.

By the time the three days ended, the beleaguered, and some would say unfairly harassed former wrestler, former referee for the now defunct Don Owen regional territory, father of arguably 1994's most outstanding heel wrestler in the world, currently a struggling Oregon-based wrestling promoter, successful local businessman, and head of a well-known wrestling family had accomplished some remarkable, perhaps even historical, feats:

1) He held a legit pro wrestling press conference whose subject matter within 24-hours had been reported locally, picked up nationally, and (primarily via CNN) broadcast nearly entirely around the world.

2) He introduced to the Pacific Northwest the world's latest, hottest style of pro wrestling which was seen, not only by the ethnic group that knows and understands it best, but also by a couple hundred mainstream fans who had never really seen anything like it before, and who probably represent the largest single group of non-Hispanics to ever see lucha libre in the United States.

3) He conducted two of the most unique wrestling cards ever seen in the area, not in his home state of Oregon, but, indeed, just across the Columbia River in the nearby State of Washington, which means the State of Oregon once again lost wrestling tax dollars to another state, one whose wrestling commission does not seem obsessed with preventing Barr from promoting wrestling there, as appears to be the case in Oregon where wrestling commissioner Bruce Anderson refuses to allow Sandy Barr to promote (for what some believe are personal and ill-founded reasons.)

4) He surprised the wrestling and mainstream worlds by signing an extremely well-known and controversial former Olympic female ice skater to "work" at ringside during the second of his two shows, something a Japanese promotion with their millions of dollars and millions of yen had tried to pull-off several months ago, but were unable to accomplish. And, without a doubt,

5) He established himself and his Capital Sports promotion as the "major risk-taking," creatively minded number one wrestling entity in the often erratic, controversy-plagued, post-Don Owen-era/territory, making it almost mandatory now that he either patches up his differences with the Oregon wrestling commission, or somehow ploughs through the barriers the commission has set forth, in order to truly return consistent, big time professional wrestling, with or without major TV, to the area, and especially to the City of Portland, especially if Roddy Piper, as rumored, is waiting in the wings to go against him.

Talk about one of your busier weeks!

Actually, according to one source, the Tonya Harding deal, which reportedly was struck for \$5,000, and which may allow Sandy Barr's promotion to act as her booking agent for other AAA/Lucha Libre shows to be held later this summer on the West Coast (which is the only part of the world where the federal court will allow Harding to work as part of her sentence for her after-the-fact involvement in the Nancy Kerrigan knee-capping incident prior to the recent Winter Olympics), took about two months to consummate with members of Barr's family, a quiet staff, and attorney working quietly behind the scenes to cultivate first Harding's trust, then interest, and finally the deal which saw her appear at an hour-long press conference on Monday, 6/20, accompanied by a happy Sandy Barr, his son Art (who wrestles as the world's top rudo "Love Machine" for AAA in Mexico), various other American grapplers from Barr's promotion, and Mexican wrestlers from AAA, with some of the wrestlers wearing masks of Psicosis, Rey Mysterio Jr., Blue Panther, Expectrito and Mascarita Sagrada. [Editor's note: Some blue nose reporter with the Associated Press, who wouldn't know a great pro wrestling

angle from his or her anus, wrote that the press conference "degenerated into a show of shoving, racism, and bilingual shouting" when Art Barr threw a cup of water into Konnan's face. Hey, A.P., this is wrestling, not the metropolitan opera!]

Whereas Harding did not appear at the 6/21 card in the medium-sized Sun Dome arena in Yakama, a three or four hour drive from the Portland/Vancouver area, she made her pro wrestling debut on Wednesday, 6/22, at an outdoor baseball stadium-like amphitheater located on the fairgrounds in Vancouver, which is more than a few minutes drive north of Portland, across the Columbia River. (This Vancouver is not to be confused with the Canadian locale of the same name up in British Columbia.)

Because Harding reportedly had not yet had time after signing her deal to take the physical required by the Washington commission, either that or the strategy at this point was for her to not yet get physically involved, but to slowly work her into future angles, or a limited role was all she was willing to do at this time, she was not "officially" licensed to be a manager for Art Barr & Eddie Guerrero & Bruiser Brian Cox in their six-man tag match against Perro Aguayo & Konnan & Blue Panther, and essentially Harding was consigned to being the Barr team's "celebrity" manager, someone who--according to Washington's wrestling commission code--is not allowed to enter the ring to become seriously involved in the action.

During the matches, Harding sat at ringside with longtime Portland wrestling announcer and TV personality Don Coss where she tried her hand at color and other commentary over the house mic and for the promotion's TV cameras which were taping the event. On at least two occasions, Art Barr rushed to her side for "sympathy" and "commiseration," with Barr's team eventually winning the match.

Whereas attendance in both Yakima on 6/21 and Vancouver on 6/22 was very soft (early estimates range from 800-1,500 attendees overall) the size of each gate may have been just about what could have been reasonably expected since, in no way can the markets of either cities, in regards to the Hispanic populations, be compared to the markets in other American-Lucha strongholds such as Los Angeles and San Jose, CA, where the Hispanic populations are infinitely larger (millions alone in L.A.) and where the income levels of these Hispanics are essentially higher, since most of them are employed in non-agricultural industries and services, while the Hispanics who like Lucha in both Yakima and the Portland/Vancouver areas are predominantly agricultural workers for whom the night of the week is important (many must be out in the fields very early in the morning on weekdays when their employers would take a very dim view of tardiness or absence or fatigue) and for whom the lowest ticket price (I think it was \$17.50 in each city) may have been rather steep, especially since the real farming and harvesting season, especially for migrant workers who still do most of the harvesting, is only beginning or is still several weeks to a month or so away.

Probably the most significant factor for lucha's invasion into the Pacific Northwest (and certainly for the U.S. as a whole), is that the Vancouver show reportedly drew in the vicinity of 40% non-Hispanics, thanks to a solid turnout of the Angelo regulars, but also thanks to some mainstream Angelos who turned out mainly to see Tonya Harding and, almost as an after-thought, found themselves treated to undoubtably the strongest and most balanced American versus Lucha card ever held in the U.S. where they got to see the spectacular high-flying maneuvers of masked luchadores such as Rey Mysterio Jr., who faced Psicosis during one of the evening's six-man bouts, and sensational mini-wrestler Mascarita Sagrada, who faced maxi-midget Expectrito, with both Sagrada and Mysterio Jr. receiving good crowd reaction from both Angelos and Hispanics, with many people saying these two wrestlers stole the show, even though few of their really spectacular moves were made because of ring conditions.

So, whereas it was a non-wrestler, Harding, who got most of the Angelos to come to the Vancouver event, and whereas it was the Lucha-style, the amazing feats of athleticism and daring which eventually satisfied the entire crowd, the larger question remains: once the gimmick (Harding) wears thin, or simply becomes a part of the show, can the gimmick of high-flying Lucha-style mixed with solid American-style wrestling endure and eventually bring the non-Hispanics back regularly, and, with shows on weekends (versus weekdays) bring even more of the Hispanics to the shows so that the entire effort is more profitable than simply running the usual American fare which is making nobody in the Northwest rich?

Essentially, the Vancouver card began with a couple of strictly American-style matches featuring wrestlers from Sandy Barr's promotion. Then the "midgets" took over and, according to one observer who had never seen them before, "they tore the house down," with Mascarita Sagrada "blowing everyone away" which is also a testimony to something Dave Meltzer has pointed out, that against a larger "midget" opponent, in this case, Expectrito, a smaller worker can use the size and extra weight of his opponent as leverage or a solid base or as a springboard from which to launch himself or perform some of his more spectacular moves.

Originally, and fortunately for every one involved, a pair of American midgets who were reportedly supposed to be on both cards (working with the little Luchadores), were unable to make it, which, if they had made it, I'm afraid, would have turned out to be an incredible embarrassment and joke and, regarding a return gate, it would have hurt measurably, since I know of no current American midget who could even begin to work a Lucha-styled match, since, it seems what's left of the American-midget acts still are trying to get by with the vaudeville comedy, slapstick and pratfalls which entertained crowds in the Golden Era, but which seem to have lost their allure today.

The main events in both cities were a pair of six-man matches, one in Vancouver already mentioned, which featured Perro Aguayo getting on the house mic and schmoozing with the Hispanics in their native tongue. The other six-man main in Vancouver had Billy Jack Haynes & C.W. Bergstrom & Rey Mysterio Jr. vs Ryuma Go & Col. DeBeers & Psicosis (whose "horned" mask bares a remarkable likeness to that of Jushin "Thunder" Liger's) and even though most of you who are reading this probably have not yet had a chance to witness your first lucha match, I'm sure you won't have a problem guessing which of the six did most of the flying that, according to one watcher "tore the crowd's socks off!"

According to gossip from the dressing area after the matches, Billy Jack Haynes, who was given the job of doing the job in Vancouver, marveled at the skill and intensity of the two Mexican flyers. Even Ryuma Go, who has seen more than his share of flyers in Japan, was said to mention that the Mexicans were the most exciting wrestlers he's ever seen.

Whereas most of the TV stations in Yakima (namely KIMA and KNDO) and Portland/Vancouver (Channels 2, 8, and 12) gave the pre-cards and the post-shows impressive reviews (with most of the sportscasters themselves generally treating the appearance of the Luchadores as a special event, and not the usual wrestling joke most mainstream media give it), Channel 6 in the Portland area apparently crucified Sandy Barr using almost "word for word" comments made in the past by Oregon Wrestling Commission Director Bruce Anderson. (Channel 2, down in Oakland, CA, which carries WWF SUPERSTARS and ALL AMERICAN, covered the story in a negative way, calling Art Barr a sex offender and Harding a convicted felon. It will be interesting to see how the station covers the WWF's steroids trial once that matter hits the fan.)

Obviously, the promoter of the first ever Lucha-type shows in the Northwest was disappointed that the crowds were not bigger, and whereas there is enthusiasm to run more shows in the future, the costs involved will almost make it mandatory that the next shows draw considerably larger crowds, and in reality, the only way significant revenues will be generated, is if the shows are able to draw both an Angelo and Hispanic audience since neither population alone can support the costs of bringing in top AAA talent, especially on weekends. Also, depending on the success of Harding's other career ventures (she's appearing in a TV movie due out this year) "wrestling" may turn out to be her only steady and lucrative form of work, and with or without Lucha, her presence at Northwest cards could significantly add to the fan base which already exists in the territory.

(SNS)

Terrorizing sick little kids works for the WWF!

Toronto, Ontario, Canada -- Curious as to why Vince McMahon and the WWF ran an angle in which one of its stars, Jerry "The King" Lawler, did his best to stop hospitalized children from getting Roddy Piper's winnings, which could be used to help them get well, *Pro Wrestling Sushi* has learned the reason behind such an angle.

According to J.J. Dillon, vice-president in charge of Titan's Human Resources Division for Talent Development & Procurement, when the little children at the HOSPITAL FOR SICK KIDS in Toronto turned on their TV sets and discovered that Lawler wanted to prevent them from getting money that could save their lives, most of the kids began crying, or got real depressed, or held up hand-painted signs for TV cameras that said, "PLEASE, DON'T UNPLUG OUR MACHINES!" while some of the more unstable kids really freaked-out and became so distraught that they had to be transferred to Toronto's HOSPITAL FOR REALLY, REALLY SICK KIDS, a place where mentally ill and emotionally disturbed children are housed.

When asked why the WWF would want to cause sick little children to become so distraught, and possibly even sicker, so much so, that they are sent to an insane asylum (where they will probably become sicker yet, not to mention that they will probably grow up to become seriously warped, heinously deranged, and grievously psychopathic individuals like Hannibal Lechter in *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*), Dillon, who appropriately was the leader of the Four Horseman in WCW, smiled and replied.

"Where do you think the WWF gets most of its bookers, attorneys, marketing managers

and other key administrators like myself? Bookers like Pat Patterson and creative people like me are *made*, man, not born!"

NFL legend, 'Anvil' Niedhart, & the Piper 'kid' save '94 KING O' THE RING!

It usually never fails. Whenever I have high expectations about something, say, a major pro wrestling event, I am more than likely disappointed, or at worst, the event does not live up to the hype I've allowed myself to swallow up in great gobs. On the other hand, when I'm least expecting a show to really deliver the goods, it will often surprise me and treat me to a couple of hours of pure, knee-slapping enjoyment.

I sure as heck wasn't expecting very much from Titan's 6/19 KING OF THE RING, from Baltimore, MD, and, by golly, *not very much at all* was precisely what it delivered. Because my expectations were so low, though, I can't really say KOTR disappointed me. On the other hand, I can't exactly say it bored the heck out of me, either, what with the "new generation" of special-effects lighting, which is able to throw green razors, white numerals (as in 1-2-3), and dollar signs on almost any surface in the building, and with "new generation" guest color commentator like former NFL football great Art Donovan who worked fellow commentators "Macho Man" Randy Savage and Gorilla Monsoon better than Curly worked Moe and Larry during any of the classic THREE STOOGES comedies. (At one point, after Donovan declared the obvious for about the 50th time--"Gorilla, how can a man take that kind of beating?"--and finally, near the end, when Savage fully had his back turned on Donovan as he and Monsoon were completely ignoring him as if he were a leper), I realized his comments were about the only things worth listening too, and just about the only things that were getting either a hearty laugh out of me or an honest groan. I'm sure a lot of you will disagree, but I liked Art.

Actually, there are a bunch of other things and moments about the PPV from Baltimore Arena that will stick in my mind, and which, to be honest, made it a fun show:

Luna Vachon dressed as a Coors beer can with most of the aluminum missing. ~~Her butt was~~ Luna's butt. Luna's lovey butt. Luna's exotic rump on any PPV is worth at least \$5 of the eventual bill from the cable TV company. Bab Bam Bigelo holding Razor Ramon in the back breaker for such a long time, I almost thought he was giving birth to a hunch.

The white rings or tape on Mabel's fingers? Realizing Mabel is so big, they're probably neither rings nor tape, but powdered-sugar doughnuts! Wondering how Moe is feeling about Mabel's sudden rise to fame and fortune without him? And if Mabel ever calls Moe, to see how the little fellow is doing? And if Moe is just sitting at home waiting for the phone to ring? And getting po'd when it doesn't, and dreaming about how Mabel would look turning slowly on a gigantic bar-b-que spit!

When Tatanka lost to Owen Hart...and Art Donovan wondered aloud if there would be a lot of pissed-off Indians tomorrow? When Jarrett was demolishing Kid after their match, and Savage seriously said it was "ruining the prestige" of the KOTR tournament. Prestige? HA-HA-HA-HA! My nomination for best laugh of 1994.

I gave the Diesel vs. Bret Hart match**** because of the involvement of Shawn Michaels and mysterious Hart family-member-in-Bret's-corner Jim "The Anvil" Niedhart. That one scene where Anvil chased Shawn around (and through the ring) had more action than the entire first round of the tournament. Also, because Diesel has come such a long way from his days as Oz in the WCW, and because of the way he was selling Bret's punches, and the way he was methodically working on Bret's back, softening him up for the "Jackknife!" Let's face it, what kind of match could these two guys really have on their own without all the extra ingredients? When all those ingredients were blended together, the final product came out good and, for me, it was satisfying and even better than expected.

While on his way to becoming crowned as KOTR, Owen Hart demonstrated his ability to work believable matches with any kind of opponent as his **** match with 1-2-3 Kid, in my opinion, surpassed the match he had with brother Bret at WMX. From opening drop kicks, thru machine gun-like near pin-falls and moonsaults, this match should go down as being the hottest "short" match of the year. Watching it (within the context of the entire card) was like going deep sea fishing. Toss out the line, wait, wait, and wait, and then BANG! Katie bar the door! After Owen beat Razor with Niedhart's help to win the tournament (and the right to be known from here on as "The King of Harts" which is pretty clever when you come to think about it) the coronation ceremony with Todd Pettengill being forced to kneel and The Anvil subtly doing great visual gags was a gas that had me laughing the whole time.

Whereas Luger's interference with Yokozuna-Crush vs. Head Shrinkers, which gave the tag belt to the Lou Albano-advised Samoans, was a DUD, the continuous interference by the kid who did the Roddy Piper impersonation on RAW, helped turn the Lawler-Piper main event into

more than just a match where Piper went out and simply kicked the crap outta Lawler until the bell rang. Use of the kid was brilliant booking and near textbook perfect psychology.****
In retrospect, for looking so weak on paper, this PPV actually turned out thumbs-up.

^^^Mascarito Susheeto!^^^

Sushiland's view of the U.S. wrestling industry & hardcore fan effort to understand, appreciate, exploit and/or avoid Loochagrap! (Or... How to survive the Lucha Libre 'Invasion' without necessarily obsessing on it, speaking the language, flying to Mexico, or drinking the water!)

Light poles, bodies & Coca Cola 'fly' during Yakima's USA vs. Lucha show!

By Brent Siewert, Kirkland, Washington

By the time the featured 6-man tag was building to its finish, it was raining large Cokes in the Yakima, WA Sundome. About 25 cups of the beverage were hurled at the rudos which ended up being the hurlers' tickets to an early exit from the building. While ushers were trying to keep people seated and Cokes from being launched, a bleeding Perro Agyayo was getting pinned in the decisive third fall. The pandemonium had started during the pre-match scuffling as Art "Love Machine" Barr backed into a 25-foot high light standard, and as it fell, the dang thing actually got into the spirit of the things by doing a graceful axe-handle smash onto the raised entrance ramp, ending up high-centered over the ramp and security railing. Amazingly, no one was injured. By the time the evening was over, babies had cried, women had shouted, men had laughed, Coca Cola had earned a lot of "frequent flyer" mileage, ushers had ousted, rudos had taunted, and technicians had saluted the crowd. It was Lucha Libre, AAA vs. Championship Wrestling USA.

For a Lucha rookie, it was pretty easy to tell what roles the wrestlers played, even though in this venue the ring announcements were in Spanish, but if the luchadores weren't listed on the poster, I had no clue who they were. A sparse crowd (maybe 500 in an 8,000 seat arena used mostly for CBA basketball) started out the evening being entertained by a musical combo whose volume was good for loosening dental fillings. The crowd was mostly male, in groups of two or three, although there were a lot of couples, including many kids. Tickets went from \$17.50 to \$35 for ringside, with most of the ringside seats sold. It was strictly a walk-up crowd, about 98% Hispanic. They get Galavision here, and it was apparent they knew the nuances of each wrestler. The ring entrance girls, who appeared to be local talent and not from Mexico, seemed to be the only ones buying beer up until 8:15 p.m.

After the opener, which started about a half-hour late, Rey Mysterio Jr., Billy Jack Haynes and C.W. Bergstrom vs. Psicosis, Dane Rush and Corp. Somebody, who got good heat from the crowd, came to the ring, with the big deal here being Rey and Psicosis, who worked great together in several extended chain moves and combos, including a great fake tope which popped the crowd, that Cactus Jack forward roll from the ring apron onto the guy standing on the floor, a full somersault splash over the top rope, several spinning head scissors, and plenty of near falls.

The Lucha part of this match came whenever Rey and Psicosis were in together, but it didn't appear that tags were necessary to get the next guy in until they were building heat for the hot tag by doing the "ref-missed-the-tag, hey-why-don't-you-ask-the-crowd-if-I-tagged-him" routine until the fresh man finally got in. When the AAA luchadores weren't in, it was your basic "big guy" chest-thumper.

Rudos Chavo and Mando Guerrero pounded on Jim and Carl Pope in a match where the Hispanics were cheering the athletic-looking white guys and screaming at Los Bros. Guerrero. The final pin came after the "you flip in the air and land with your back on the other guy's chest" finisher that has a three-syllable name when it's done in Japan.

Next came the midget match between Mascarita Sagrada ad Expectrito, which unlike U.S. midgets matches, wasn't entirely played for comedy as these guys did some of the better moves of the evening. There were some Lucha rules going on as the match ended with rudo Expectrito taking off his own mask and blaming Sagrada for it, and naturally the ref fell for it. (Of course he was only following the fine and fabled tradition of ex-ref/current promoter Sandy Barr, who in his referee days never quite saw those brass knuckles or rolls of quarters no matter how loud the crowd pointed out these violations of the rules.)

The feature match definitely got the crowd going, as Art Barr and his partners Jesse Barr and Bruiser Brian were baiting the crowd big time. The fans were cheering Konnan, Perro Aguayo and the masked Blue Panther. The match itself had less of the choreographed, acrobatic style I had expected but the action was all over the place. Two guys from the audience threw chairs over the security railing to the technicians for use on the Americans,

although there were no chair shots. The red and white Coke cups started to fly. Perro juiced at some point when he was out of the ring and ended up taking most of the abuse for the rest of the match. Barr, in hasty retreat from Konnan, fell back against the tipsy light standard a second time, much to the dismay of the road crew who had just righted it. Everybody was flying into security railings. Ushers were tossing people out for participating in the 15 yard Coke cup hurl. Finally, after Perro was pinned, Billy Jack Haynes and several faces returned to chase off the Barr team. They gathered to give an extended speech where they seemed to be pumping up the locals and thanking them for coming. The crowd loved the technicos and were able to shake hands, get autographs and take pictures in the aftermath.

It was a fun night, and even though I was expected to be lost in terms of what motivated the action in a possibly hostile environment, I was laughing, booing, cheering and had a damn-fool grin on my face the whole time, much like the rest of the crowd. A total mark and loving it.

Lucha notes: In the wake of Dave Meltzer's 4/4 lucha libre editorial, *Wrestling Perspective* is now the latest major secondary sheet to significantly mention the Mexican style of wrestling. Within this context, WP is also the first sheet to run an article highly critical of lucha via a column by WP regular Bill "Potshots" Kunkel who saw the unimpressive AAA/Las Vegas card on 5/28 and was, well, so unimpressed, he walked out during the main event, "bored into near paralysis." To discover why Kunkel, one of the wrestling underground's most outspoken critics, isn't jumping on the lucha bandwagon (or to read the third installment of a gem of a Paul MacArthur interview with Missy Hyatt, who comes off more and more loveable each time out, or to eavesdrop on a beautiful, sentimental, heartwarming conversation in which former WCW referee Tommy Young tells co-editor David Skolnick about his behind the scenes trip to SLAMBOREE, or to discover why legendary Jim Londos rates high on "The Phantom of the Ring's" list of the world's most crooked crooks) send \$1.50 for issue #44, or a check made out to "Wrestling Perspective" for up to \$18 for a 12 month subscription to: PO Box 401, Camillus, NY 13031-0401. . .

Do you remember the first time you went to the circus, walked into a really great amusement park, popped your cherry at your first pro wrestling card, or read your first underground wrestling newsletter? And later, after some time went by, you couldn't get the experience out of your mind, and you found yourself looking forward to the next visit, the sequel, or the rematch? Mike Lano's premier 12-page issue of *WRestling WReality* (\$1.75), 450 Sutter St., Suite 1643, San Francisco, CA 94108, hit the mail boxes in June, and, let there be no doubt, once you open it and start reading through its non-stop quips and global commentary, news footnotes that seem to have gone unreported elsewhere, Lano's gonzo-style of schmoozing, behind the scene laundry airings, under-the-breath-shootings, Potshot Bill Kunkel's art, and columns by rotating guests such as Lou Thesz, Gary Albright (the UWFI shoot-wrestler who seems to have a serious problem with Dave Meltzer), Vampiro, Mimi Lessa, and Ron Skoler (with literally dozens of other big names waiting in the wings), it's like climbing aboard a pro wrestling theme park's version of Space Mountain-- when the ride has ended, you know you got your money's worth, but you feel like climbing aboard again just to make sure you weren't dreaming! It's like I've always said about dental Doc Mike Lano, he may not always be politically correct, but his roots in the business seem to spread deep and wide, as his first issue shows him to be connected with a lot of players as well as a large section of wrestling's historic subculture, a huge part of which forms a bridge between the Golden Era of wrestling and whatever it is that the sport is called today. Superb graphics and layout. A totally different kind of sheet. Nothing like it on the market today. Amazing debut issue!

(SNS)

New twist in 'McMahon vs. America' steroids trial (barring 11th hour plea!)

STAMFORD, CT -- According to claims filed by a mysterious "John Doe" in a unique civil/federal lawsuit that seeks \$100 million in damages, a case which, amazingly, will be tried along with the federal government's "McMahon vs. America" steroids trial in New York, the WWF has been charged with subjecting and/or forcing the claimant (who is also believed to be a secret government witness) to observe and/or be a party to various acts involving sex harassment, molestation, unpaid services rendered, steroids abuse, and being made to take career-ending bumps for which the battered worker says "no training was provided!"

Rest assured (as sure as the fact that Jerry "The King" Lawler takes his best friends to Taco Bell!) that Sushi News Service (SNS) will publish the identity and further information regarding the plaintiff in this remarkable "double-case" as soon as pro wrestling's most historic trial begins, unless, of course it's already been plea bargained!

Have a great July 4th, everyone! Drop us a line if you can. See you all after the 7/17 BASH! --Jeff Mullins, Ed.